MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
For the Montana National Register of Historic Places Program and State Antiquities Database

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Historical Society
PO Box 201202, 1410 8th Ave
Helena, MT 59620-1202

Property Address: **1315 Lockey Avenue** Historic Address (if applicable): **NA** City/Town: **Helena**	Site Number: **24 LC 2193** (An historic district number may also apply.) County: **Lewis & Clark**
Historic Name: **Unemployment Compensation Commission Building** Original Owner(s): **State of Montana** Current Ownership ☐ Private **X** Public Current Property Name: **Department of Labor & Industry Walt Sullivan Building** Owner(s): **State of Montana** Owner Address: **Department of Administration 132 Lockey Avenue** Phone:	Legal Location PM: **Montana** Township: **10N** Range: **3W** **SE** ¼ **NW** ¼ **NW** ¼ of Section: **32** Lot(s): **Unknown** Block(s): **Unknown** Addition: **Corbin Addition** Year of Addition: USGS Quad Name: **Helena** Year: **1985**
Historic Use: **Office** Current Use: **Office** Construction Date: **1961** ☐ Estimated **X** Actual **X** Original Location ☐ Moved Date Moved:	UTM Reference www.nris.mt.gov/topofinder2 ☐ NAD 27 **X** NAD 83 (**preferred**) Zone: **12** Easting: **422071** Northing: **5159510**
National Register of Historic Places NRHP Listing Date: Historic District: NRHP Eligible: **X** Yes ☐ No	Date of this document: **February 1, 2010** Form Prepared by: **Diana J. Painter, PhD** Address: **3518 N. C Street, Spokane, WA 99205** Daytime Phone: **(707) 364-0697**
MT SHPO USE ONLY Eligible for NRHP: X yes □ no Criteria: □ A □ B X C □ D Date: 11/16/2010 Evaluator: Kate Hampton	Comments:

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION **X** See Additional Information Page

Architectural Style: **Modern** If Other, specify: **Curtain Wall**
Property Type: **Commercial** Specific Property Type: **Office**

Architect: **Lewy Evans Jr.** Architectural Firm/City/State: **Evans, LaMont and Cole, Billings, MT**
Builder/Contractor: Company/City/State: **A & B Construction Co., Helena, MT**
Source of Information: **Open House announcement**

Location and setting. The Walter Sullivan Labor & Industry Building is located at 1315 Lockey Avenue within the State of Montana capital campus in Helena. A modern curtain-wall building, it was constructed by the state in 1959 to house the Unemployment Compensation department. The building is five stories, with a somewhat L-shaped footprint and a flat roof. It is located in the northeast corner of a block bounded by Lockey Avenue on the north; N. Saunders Street on the east; E. Broadway Avenue on the south; and S. Montana Avenue on the west. This block is located to the immediate south of the Capital; the building is south and slightly west of the capital building. Its public entries face north onto Lockey Avenue. To the immediate east of the building is the Cogswell Building and to the immediate west is Old Board of Health Building. Parking is to the rear of the building, between the structure and Broadway Avenue as it curves around to the west.

Materials. The building is a steel frame with exterior cladding of precast concrete panels and curtain walls with aluminum frames. Exterior materials include smooth concrete, concrete aggregate, slightly blue-tinted glass in flat aluminum frames, corrugated aluminum panels, and corrugated aluminum vertical louvers. It has a concrete foundation and a built-up roof. The building is finished in a narrow metal coping. It was designed in the Modern style by architects Evans, LaMont and Cole of Billings, Montana.

Massing and design. The building has a largely L-shaped footprint, with some setbacks or jogs on the building faces. A taller circulation tower anchors the east end and a mechanical penthouse is located toward the west end. The major mass on the front façade, which is clad in glass and concrete panels, projects beyond the face of the mechanical tower and the westerly wing. It is enframed in a projecting aggregate-clad frame that begins one story above the ground plane and continues around the sides and top of this wing. On the rear of the building, an L-shaped plane wraps around the circulation tower in the southwest corner of the building, rising above the building parapets of both the projecting wing on this end and the south façade of the main body of the building. The four upper floors of the main body of the building on the south side, which display curtain wall cladding, are covered in vertical aluminum louvers that are designed to shade the interiors of this wing. The function of these fins was described as follows in an article on the opening of the building: "The south side of the five-story structure is covered by vertical louvers which open and close to keep sunlight from the windows and ease the work of the air conditioning equipment."

The east facade of the building displays a projecting circulation tower. It is solid but for a continuous vertical stack of fixed lights, separated by aluminum muntins that raise the full height of this feature. The east façade of the southwestern wing of the building is visible beyond.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The **north façade** of the building has three 'parts.' The name of the building in projecting letters is located to the left on the vertical tower that anchors this end of the building. The main, central portion of this façade is the enframed curtain wall of the main east-west body of the building, which projects from the other faces and is matched by another curtain wall on the south façade. It is finished in a metal coping. The east end of this façade is recessed behind the plane of the main body of the building. It repeats the lines of the main body, but has smaller ribbon window. A heavy 'cornice' with a slightly battered shape rises up slightly higher than the curtain wall building and finishes this portion of the building.

The central portion of the north façade has a ground floor that is slightly recessed behind the overhanging curtain wall, and is relatively solid. It has bands of short ribbon windows placed a few feet above grade, indicating a lower finished floor in this portion of the building. They are centered below and vertically aligned with the major bays above. An entry located on the far left side has double doors of full-height glass flanked by vertically-oriented windows of full-height glass. The building has five bays of windows extending four floors, separated by wide continuous aggregate-clad panels. The bays are separated on the curtain wall by vertical panels of corrugated aluminum. The bay to the left (east) is small, whereas the remaining bays are of uniform size. Typical window bays consist of ten lights; eight fixed lights and two small awning sash at the lower level. Window frames are aluminum.

The west end of the north façade steps back from the central portion and is visibly four floors in height, the lower floor beginning about one-half level above grade. The entry on this face is tall. It consists of double doors with full-height glass flanked by full-height side lights. Above are four tall transom lights that meet the ribbon windows to the right. Each floor is represented by three bays of ribbon windows separated by a vertical corrugated aluminum panel. Each floor is separated by a wide, solid aggregate band with a slight reveal framing the ribbon windows below. The window bays consist of a central fixed light flanked by two casement lights. An aluminum panel terminates the corner of the building on the far west side. The heavy cornice, which projects from the façade of the building, lends weight and substance to this secondary wing.

The **west façade** of the building continues the fenestration pattern of the wing described above. It consists of three long bays toward the north and a short bay on the south side. This is terminated with a wide, solid 'pilaster', capped by the large cornice feature. Also visible on this façade is a building projection on the south side of the building represented by four floors of one window bay each, behind the solid south-facing wall of aggregate that projects beyond the face of this bay. Each ribbon window consists of three-over-three-lights, the upper lights being larger and somewhat vertically-oriented. Below, at the ground level, is a covered entryway of solid and transparent panels, covered by a corrugated metal roof. The original overhang over the entry, a projecting flat roof with aluminum fascia, is visible above.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The **south façade** of the building faces onto the parking area. It has three distinct portions. On the left (west) is the solid aggregate end wall of the west wing of the building. In the middle is the solid end wall of the projecting bay described earlier. To the right is the curtain wall face of the building, which repeats the same fenestration pattern described earlier with respect to the north façade. This window wall is covered, however, with vertical metal louvers that extend from floor to floor. They have a zigzag shape in profile and are designed to move with the sun, protecting this south face from heat gain. The east side of the projecting wing on this façade has a ribbon window of four lights (two fixed lights and two operable lights) at each floor. The solid wall that wraps around this wing rises above the roofline here, and an extension of the solid cornice, terminated with a narrow metal coping, finishes this projecting wing.

The four upper floors of the building rise above a full ground level floor in this location, which has a relatively solid concrete face that is recessed about 2'-0" from the overhanging louvered face. It displays a few hopper-style windows and louvered openings. The ground here is retained with a concrete wall, allowing for automobile and pedestrian access to the core in the projecting wing at the west end of this façade and to the main building at the ground level.

Landscaping and site features. The site for the Walt Sullivan Building rises sharply on the west side, revealing only the upper four floors in this location. The building has ground-level entries on the north façade, along Lockey Street, where it faces the main capital complex. The site also rises to the south, up to E. Broadway Street. The parking level here is at about the second floor level of the building, requiring retaining walls along this face. A small stair accesses the rear, south side of the building from the southeast corner, and another stair accesses the neighboring building to the west on the southwest corner of the building. The parking area, which is south and west of the building, is large, appearing to serve this entire end of the campus. It is landscaped, primarily on the sides facing the capital building. The building frontage is landscaped with mature street trees. A cluster of aspect trees around the northwest entry provide a counterpoint to the aggregate panels on the building at this location.

Changes over time. The building was renovated in 1981, when the westerly wing was added. Previously the overall form of the building was simpler; the main curtain wall portion of the building was accented by the east tower. It may be that the projecting frame around the curtain wall was re-clad in conjunction with the remodel, as it was described as having a tile finish in an earlier brochure and a photograph at the building opening showed that the this are was finished in small tiles. (note that historically the building was referred to as four stories with a basement; today it is referred to as a five-story building in the State records).

Architectural Context

Curtain wall construction was combined with masonry and with steel frame construction at mid-century to create what has been called the "quintessential symbol of post-World War II modern architecture" *(Prudon, 2008:107)*. Curtain wall construction is easily recognizable and readily associated with commercial and institutional building types at mid-century.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

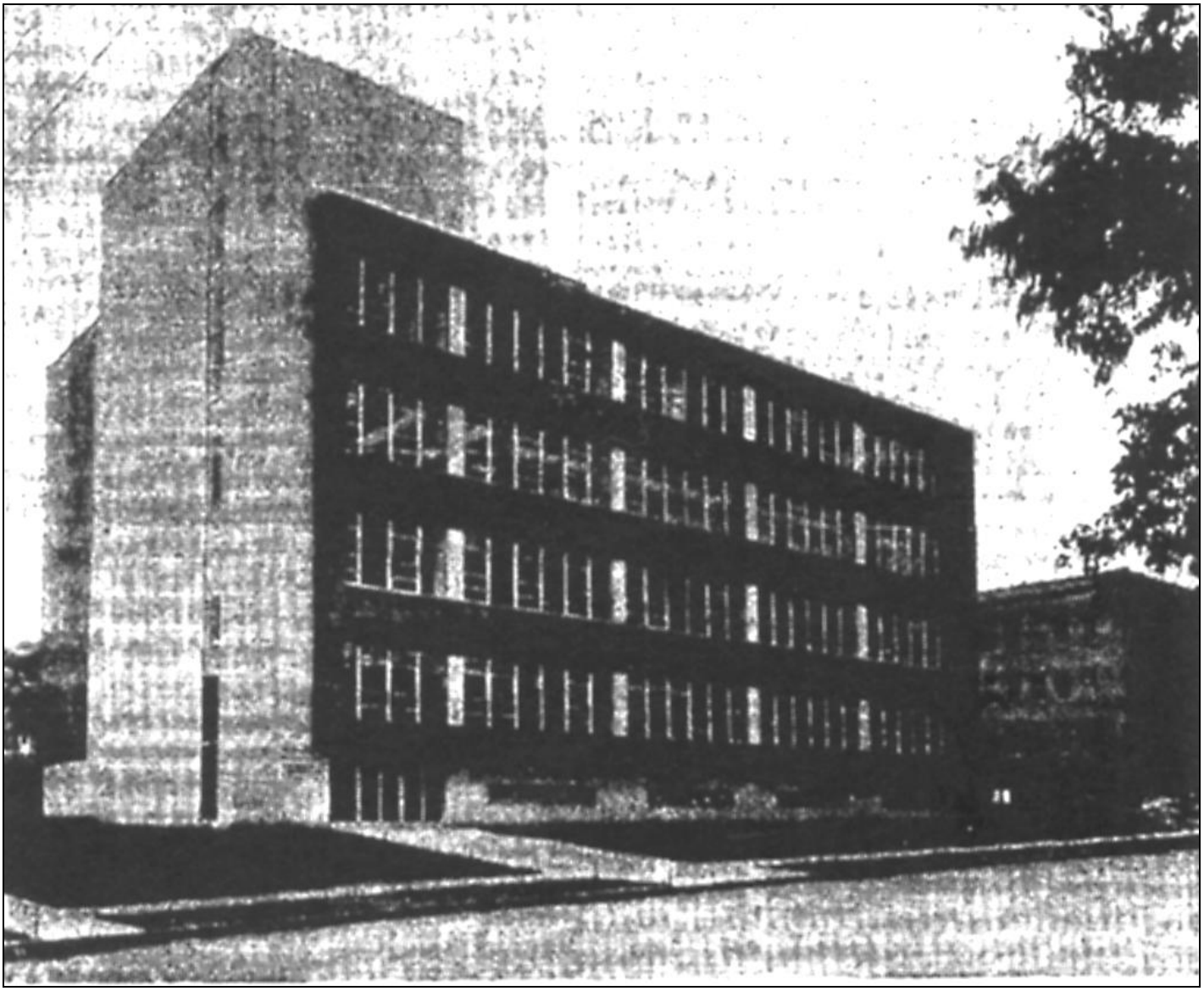
In addition to being identified with its typical stylistic treatment, curtain wall construction refers to the material itself, its manufacture, installation, and the construction methods with which it is associated *(Prudon, 2008:107)*.

Separating the structural system of a building from its window wall was attractive to building designers and owners because it created more light on building interiors and allowed for more flexibility in the use of interior spaces. The larger glazed areas in curtain wall construction, which allowed for natural light in interior work spaces, was made possible by new methods of manufacturing glass and made practical by widespread use of air conditioning after World War II. Improvements in sealants and insulation materials also made this form of design and construction practical.

The metal most commonly associated with mid-century curtain wall construction is aluminum, which replaced steel in the post-war era as the material of choice for this application. Aluminum framing for curtain wall construction was extruded and could, as a result, take on any cross sectional shape *(Kaskel, 1995:24)*. Aluminum was readily available and inexpensive after World War II, as the output of the nation's aluminum plants was adapted to civilian purposes.

The use of exterior curtain walls also rationalized the construction process, leading to great efficiencies in building production. Whether the curtain wall was fabricated primarily on site or prefabricated in large panels, the metal components were produced at the factory, leading to labor savings on site. The material was also lighter than traditional masonry, allowing for easier handling and reduced shipping costs.

A number of materials were used for the spandrel panels under the windows, but the most popular were metal or glass. Glass panels were manufactured under the names Spandrelite and Vitrolux, and came in eight and sixteen colors respectively. Porcelain enamel on steel, which could also be manufactured in numerous colors, was a popular material and finish for spandrel panels. Aluminum and stainless steel were also used. As the post-war decades progressed, additional materials such as thin stone veneer, precast concrete, prefabricated brick masonry panels, as well as new generations of glazed products became popular, in addition to the glass, aluminum and brick veneer of the immediate post-war era *(Kelley, 1995:15)*.



Original building as published in The Independent Record in 1961

HISTORY OF PROPERTY **X** See Additional Information Page

Preliminary planning for the Unemployment Compensation Commission Building began in January 1958. The legislature selected a building site in 1959 and the building was funded and designed. Construction began in November 1959 and took 20 months to complete. The open house for the building was held July 19 and 20, 1961.

The architect for the building was Larry Evans Jr. of the firm Evans, LaMont and Cole of Billings. The General Contractor was A & B Construction Co. of Helena. A detailed article on the building appeared in *The Independent Record* on the occasion of its opening. One of the features mentioned and illustrated was a mosaic tile mural in the lobby depicting three workers by Billings artist Robert C. Morris. The mosaic was accompanied by a quote from Abraham Lincoln: "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master" *(Unemployment Compensation Building to Have Opening," 1961:1).*

The article emphasized that many Montana materials were used in the construction of the building, including Montana travertine in the lobby. The article also bragged that, "The building is unique in that it has the longest clear-span steel structural floor in the nation with no supporting columns inside the walls of the building" *(Unemployment Compensation Building to Have Opening," 1961:1).* The additional unique feature discussed in the newspaper article was the incorporation of metal louvers that were designed to deflect heat from interior of the building. It was estimated that this feature would save the state 30% in air conditioning costs for the building.

INFORMATION SOURCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY ☐ See Additional Information Page

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"Helena Boasts 31 New Buildings Constructed in 1961," *The Independent Record,* December 31, 1961, p. 4.
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Kaskel, Bruce S., "The Metal and Glass Curtain Wall," *CRM Journal,* Vol. 18, No. 8, 1995.
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_____ and Rebecca A. Shiffer. *Preserving the Recent Past***.** Washington, D.C.: Historic Preservation Education Foundation, 1995.
"Unemployment Compensation Building to Have Opening," *The Independent Record,* July 16, 1961, Section 2, p. 1.
"Welcome to: Montana's State Capitol Building," (brochure, n.d.).

HISTORY OF PROPERTY

The Unemployment Compensation Commission was established by the Montana State Legislature in 1937. It was housed in various quarters over time, most recently before the construction of the new building in the Sam Mitchell Building. The structure was paid for by the Federal government.

A brochure on the capitol campus (n.d.) describes the Walt Sullivan Building as follows. Note that there is an over $250,000 discrepancy between the cost of the building at the time of permitting, which was quoted in the newspaper as $412,115, and the cost of construction according to this state brochure.

> *The newest and most modernly styled building on the capitol campus is this four-story structure completed in 1961 at a cost of $676,805. Built of reinforced concrete and tile, this houses the full staff of the Unemployment Compensation Commission, formerly quartered in the Sam Mitchell Building. A feature of the building, which is located on the southern edge of the campus, is a series of louvered aluminum panels which move with the sun for ventilation and light.*

Architect

Architect Lewy Evans, Jr. was born in Houston, Texas and received his education at the University of Colorado, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in architectural engineering. He worked for a number of firms in the early-to-late 1950s before founding Evans LaMont, Architects in Billings in 1954, which specialized in residential, commercial and educational structures. In 1959 they were joined by Ralph Cole; in these early years the Unemployment Compensation Commission Building was their major commission. This partnership lasted until 1963, when Lewy Evans formed his own firm. After 1967 it was known as Evans & Associates. Evans specialized in educational buildings and residential complexes *(AIA Historical Directory of American Architects, 1956, 1962, 1970).*

invitation

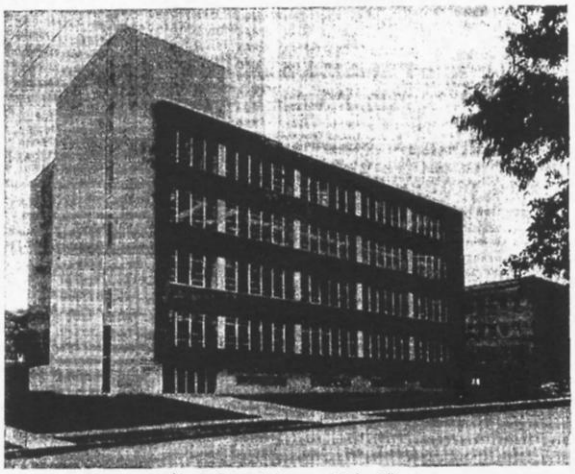
you are invited to attend the

OPEN HOUSE

of the beautiful new

Unemployment Compensation Commission Building

Corner of Roberts and Lockey Street, Southeast of the Capitol Building



Architects—Evans, LaMont and Cole, Billings

Open House Hours:
WEDNESDAY &
THURSDAY
July 19 and 20
9:30 a.m.
to 11:30 a.m.

A & B Construction Co.

General Contractor — Helena

Plumbing, Heating & Air Conditioning By

REBER
PLUMBING & HEATING
805 N. Main
Helena

Electrical Work & Fixtures By

PALMQUIST
ELECTRIC COMPANY
420 N. Main
Helena

Best Wishes

from the following subcontractors

Painting—
Hanley Glass and Paint—Helena

Roofing—
Helena Sheet Metal Works—Helena

Metal and Aluminum—
Caird Engineering Works—Helena

Concrete—
Helena Sand and Gravel—Helena

Plastering—
Kerr and Company—Billings

Masonry—
Kloepfer Brothers—Butte

Marble—
Livingston Marble and Granite Works—Livingston

Elevator—
Robert C. Morrison—Billings

Lobby Mural —
Otis Elevator—Butte

Hardware—
Stroup Hardware—Billings

Tile and Carpeting—
L.V. Swanson Company—Livingston

Cabinets—
Yuhas Mill Works—Helena

Long Span Steel—
Berger Steel Company—Lafayette, Indiana

Reinforcing Steel—
Bethlehem Steel Corporation—Seattle, Washington

Sun Control Screen—
Brown Manfacturing Company—Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Outside Stucco—
Empire Lath and Plaster Company—Billings

Property Name: **Walt Sullivan Building** Site Number: **24 LC 2193**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

NRHP Listing Date:
NRHP Eligibility: **X** Yes ☐ No **X** Individually ☐ Contributing to Historic District ☐ Noncontributing to Historic District
NRHP Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B **X** C ☐ D
Area of Significance: **Architecture** Period of Significance: **1961**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE See Additional Information Page

The Unemployment Compensation Commission Building (known as the Department of Labor & Industry Walt Sullivan Building today) is significant for its architecture. The building, designed by Lewy Evans Jr. of the Billings firm Evans, LaMont and Cole, was constructed in 1961. It is a good example of a curtain wall structure, is said to have incorporated a significant internal steel span, and incorporated many of the features representative of the times, including the use of imported tiles and mosaic artwork. The overall form of the building was simple and sculptural, relying on materials and detailing to add to visual complexity. The movable louvers that covered the rear curtain wall on the southern face of the building, designed to reduce heat gain on this façade, was an innovation not seen on other structures at the time.

An addition to the building was constructed in 1981. At some point the tile cladding was removed (research did not reveal how extensive this cladding was). It may have been replaced with concrete aggregate to unify the building complex. The new addition is subservient to the main building, in that it is smaller and the façade is recessed from the main façade of the original building, allowing this structure to visually read as it did historically. The new addition is compatible yet employs a slightly different architectural vocabulary, and one more representative of this later time frame. It has a heavier, horizontal aspect in contrast to the lighter, more vertical emphasis on the original building. Yet it employs many of the same details and also relies on a sculptural expression and fine details to convey its design qualities.
The new addition would meet the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and for this reason and because of its design qualities, the building is recommended as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Although this is not explored in the historic context for this survey, another avenue for the building's significance may be its association with the changes in Montana that are represented to this day by the work carried out by the agency that occupies the building. As noted in literature on the building, the unemployment system was established in 1937 as part of the country's New Deal programs. These programs were expanded in the late 1950s and early 1960s, as part of the Great Society programs throughout the country. The agency, called the Unemployment Compensation Commission at that time, was charged with carrying out policy at a time when Montana was becoming increasingly urbanized and diversified from its traditional resource- based economy. The changes in the agency and how it conducts its business and in relationship to the facilities provided for it, may be another area of significance to explore in the future.

INTEGRITY ☐ See Additional Information Page

The building retains integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The overall design of the building has been altered with the addition of a new wing, but the design qualities of the building remain intact. Some changes of material have taken place with the removal of the original tile finish. The tiles appear to have been replaced at least in part with an aggregate finish which would, nonetheless, have a similar fine-grained texture and is also appropriate to the age of the building. The building retains sufficient integrity to be considered for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
PHOTOGRAPHS

Property Name: **Walt Sullivan Building** Site Number: **24 LC 2193**

Description: **North (front) façade, viewed from east**

Description: **North (front) façade, viewed from west**

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
PHOTOGRAPHS

Property Name: **Walt Sullivan Building** Site Number: **24 LC 2193**

Description: **South (rear) facade**

Description: **South (rear) façade, viewed from east**

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
PHOTOGRAPHS

Property Name: **Walt Sullivan Building** Site Number: **24 LC 2193**

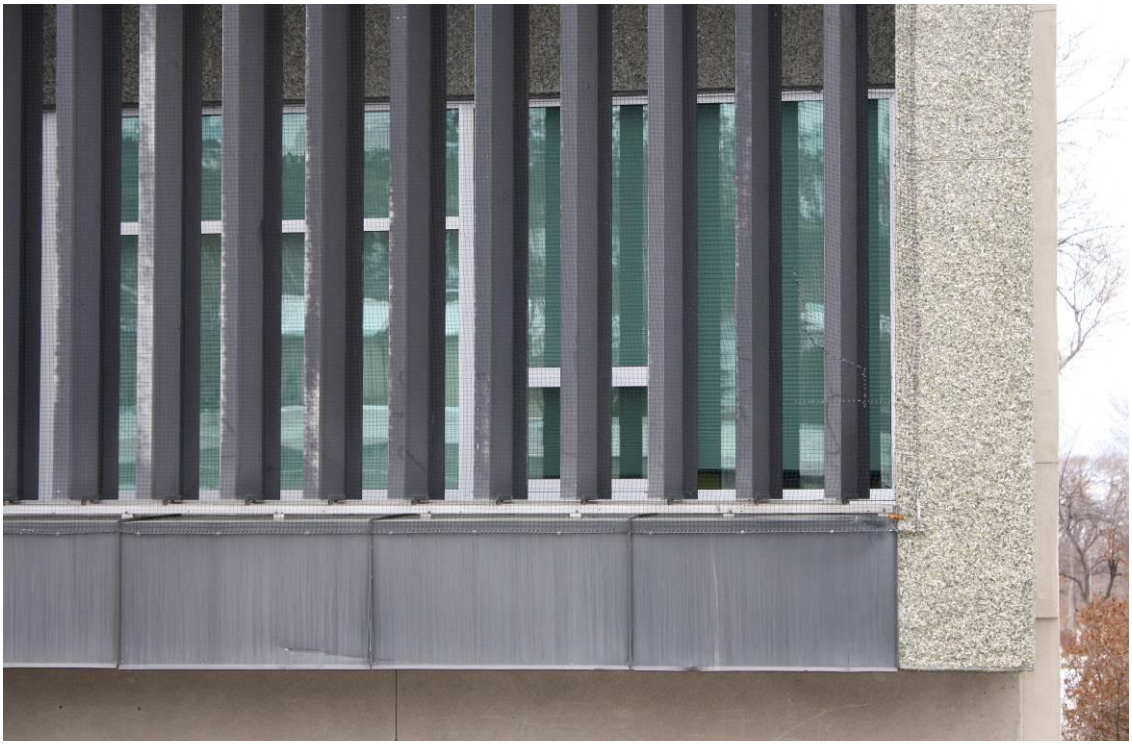
Description: **East facade**

Description: **West façade, viewed from northwest**

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD
PHOTOGRAPHS

Property Name: **Walt Sullivan Building** Site Number: **24 LC 2193**

Description: **East façade, viewed from southwest**



Description: **Detail of movable louvers with curtain wall behind**

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

SITE MAP

Property Name: **Walt Sullivan Building** Site Number: **24 LC 2193**

MONTANA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

Property Name: **Walt Sullivan Building** Site Number: **24 LC 2193**